

## REVIEWS

**Povolná, R. (2010) *Interactive Discourse Markers in Spoken English*. Brno: Masarykova univerzita. 192 pp.**

This monograph was published in a time of growing interest in understanding the conception and realization of interaction in spoken discourse from the viewpoint of implementing a variety of cooperative and politeness strategies in face-to-face conversation. The monograph represents the result of the author's interest and long-term involvement in the study of spoken discourse and in its complexity it provides an important contribution to the wide literature on spoken discourse. Renata Povolná based her study on close examination of cohesion and coherence, aiming at the conceptualization of both concepts as constitutive components of human communication and attempts to apply theoretical insights to an analysis of spoken and written varieties of English discourse. The study further contributes to a detailed exploration of discursive markers, more specifically to investigating in great detail interactive discourse markers as means of establishing coherence and expressing politeness.

The book is structured into seven chapters. After introducing the most relevant theoretical aspects of her study (Chapter 1), Renata Povolná concentrates on spoken English in general while contrasting it with the written variety of the language (Chapter 2). The main focus is on the three different genres of spoken English analysed, namely private face-to-face conversations, private telephone conversations, and public radio discussions. In Chapter 3, she discusses in considerable detail interactive discourse markers and similar items as approached in certain earlier studies such as grammar books, publications dealing with the analysis of spoken English in general and in particular many specialized studies investigating from different points of view the markers under scrutiny. Chapter 4 introduces the classification of interactive discourse markers. The author explains the criteria applied in her analysis, which combines both quantitative and qualitative methods. This chapter also gives many concrete results drawn from the analysis of authentic spoken texts, while exemplifying all the possible pragmatic functions recognized in the study.

As her main object of study is to view and examine the selected interactive discourse markers (as crucial in establishing discourse coherence and adopting politeness strategies), in Chapter 5, Renata Povolná deals with aspects of coherence in spoken discourse which are related to the use of interactive discourse markers. In Chapter 6 she takes into consideration their role as means of expressing politeness in spoken English. Chapter 7 provides conclusions related to the most important features commonly attributed to markers similar to those under investigation.

The reader will appreciate that the monograph is supplemented with a *Glossary of Terms* providing explanations of the most important terms, namely those closely connected with the use of the interactive discourse markers, and an *Appendix*, which gives a list of speakers participating in private telephone conversations and several complex tables with detailed results not included in the main body of the text.

In her monograph, Renata Povolná creates an innovative piece of work, by which she provides a wide understanding of the way speakers use and create communicative strategies, employ cooperative and politeness strategies according to the goals and purpose of face-to-face conversation. Analysing features that are characteristic of the language variety most frequently used in everyday communication between people, she takes under investigation the interactive discourse markers exploring a variety of pragmatic functions they perform in spoken discourse. She points out that it is due to these important functions that discursive markers enhance the smooth flow of interaction between discourse participants and contribute to the establishment and maintenance of discourse coherence. Since coherence is dependent on the addressee's ability to arrive at an interpretation and understanding of the message mediated by speech the author pays attention to this permanent process of negotiation of meaning during communication.

Renata Povolná brings interesting insights to this process by investigating a number of signals used by the speakers in private and public (more or less) spontaneous conversations. She points out that such signals can be used intentionally by the speaker for the benefit of the hearer(s). For instance, the presented analysis points out particular cases when the signals helped to direct the hearer to a preferred line of interpretation. The language material analysed in the book consists of nine texts, all taken from the *London-Lund Corpus*, three private face-to-face conversations, three private telephone conversations, and three public radio discussions. The speakers in the texts analysed are all adult native speakers of British English. They are males and females of different ages and different professional background.

As regards the analysis on discourse markers, Renata Povolná has succeeded to clearly point out that these markers can operate within politeness strategies, which are adopted by discourse participants mainly for face-saving reasons. The author has also provided evidence for her central hypothesis that interactive discourse markers, owing to their important pragmatic functions, play a crucial role in spoken discourse. The results of the presented analysis have shown that discursive markers enhance the smooth flow of interaction, contribute to

the establishment and maintenance of discourse coherence and participate in politeness strategies.

One of the most important contributions of this monograph is the attention paid to the features which characterize different genres of spoken English and as such are reflected in the language means that are used in a particular genre. Consequently, the study represents quite innovative and complex research into three genres, namely private face-to-face conversations, private telephone conversations, and public radio discussions. The most interesting results of the presented research show clear differences between private face-to-face conversation and telephone conversation with regard to the presence or absence of face-to-face contact and visible feedback between participants in a given communicative situation. The author's intention of identifying possible pragmatic functions of interactive discourse markers is reflected in her attempt at exemplifying in detail their use and explaining their distribution in a given genre. Thus her attempt to contribute to the study of spoken language in general has been successfully accomplished.

The monograph by Renata Povolná provides the reader with a comprehensive study of the markers used in spoken discourse with particular interest in the face-to-face conversation. This well-balanced quantitative-qualitative analysis is an important contribution to discourse studies that would appeal to a wide audience, specialists, scholars as well as university teachers and students.

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